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SUBJECT: CHILE SEEKS CLARIFICATION ON SEPT 24 TRADE AND
PROSPERITY MEETING

¶1. Ambassador Juan Pablo Lira, Director General of the Ministry Foreign Affairs, requested a meeting with Ambassador Simons on August 12 to discuss the invitation for President Bachelet to attend the Leaders' Meeting on Trade and Prosperity, to be held Sept. 24 in New York. Lira was accompanied by Ambassador Carlos Applegren, Director of the MFA's North America Office, and a notetaker. Ambassador Simons was accompanied by E/Pol Counselor and Poloff.

¶2. Lira explained that he wanted to gather additional information about the proposed meeting in advance of Foreign Minister Foxley discussing the invitation with President Bachelet August 13. The Chileans were looking for more details about the meeting--who was invited, who had accepted, what was the format, etc. In addition, the MFA officials sought clarification of the phrase "promoting security in our hemisphere," which was included in Department's talking points, and whether this indicated that defense issues would be included in the meeting as well. The Ambassador clarified that this meeting was for Western Hemisphere countries with FTAs with the U.S., would be conducted in a roundtable format, and would deal with security only in the sense of the social and economic security that economic growth can bring to a region.

¶3. The Ambassador encouraged Bachelet to attend the meeting, emphasizing that it would be a good opportunity for Chile to show solidarity with other Latin American countries who are following free trade principles, and would also be a useful signal to the two U.S. presidential candidates that Latin American leaders think that free trade is important. Attending would be a useful reflection of Bachelet's own hallmarks of free trade and reducing inequality. Lira promised to report Bachelet's decision as soon as possible.
SIMONS